

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended) A cardiac lead, comprising:
a lead body comprising one or more electrical conductors with associated insulators and having a proximal end and a distal end; and
an epicardial electrode assembly situated at the distal end of the lead body, the electrode assembly comprising:
a pacing electrode comprising an active fixation arrangement, the electrode electrically coupled to at least one of the electrical conductors; and
a fluoropolymer coating or sleeve ~~provided on a majority of~~ covering all of an electrically active ~~exposed~~ surface of the active fixation arrangement sufficient in coverage to inhibit exit block development yet facilitate electrical stimulation of cardiac tissue.
2. (Original) The lead of claim 1, wherein the electrode assembly further comprises a polymeric coating disposed on at least the active fixation arrangement, and the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve is disposed over the polymeric coating.
3. (Original) The lead of claim 1, wherein the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve comprises a polytetrafluoroethylene coating or sleeve.
4. (Original) The lead of claim 1, wherein the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve comprises an ePTFE coating or sleeve.
5. (Original) The lead of claim 1, further comprising a steroid eluting sleeve disposed on the active fixation arrangement.

6. (Currently amended) A cardiac lead, comprising:
a lead body comprising one or more electrical conductors with associated insulators and having a proximal end and a distal end;
a fixation arrangement that fixes the lead to tissue; and
an epicardial electrode assembly situated at the distal end of the lead body, the electrode assembly comprising:
a pacing electrode electrically coupled to at least one of the electrical conductors; and
a fluoropolymer coating or sleeve provided on ~~a majority of an exposed~~ all of an electrically active surface of the electrode sufficient in coverage to inhibit exit block development yet facilitate electrical stimulation of cardiac tissue.

7. (Original) The lead of claim 6, wherein the electrode assembly further comprises a polymeric coating disposed on the electrode, and the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve is disposed over the polymeric coating.

8. (Original) The lead of claim 6, wherein the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve comprises a polytetrafluoroethylene coating or sleeve.

9. (Original) The lead of claim 6, wherein the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve comprises an ePTFE coating or sleeve.

10. (Original) The lead of claim 6, further comprising a steroid eluting sleeve disposed on the electrode.

11. (Previously presented) The lead of claim 6, wherein fixation arrangement comprises an acute fixation arrangement.

12. (Original) The lead of claim 6, wherein the fixation arrangement comprises a helical fixation arrangement.

13. (Previously presented) The lead of claim 6, wherein the fixation arrangement comprises a chronic fixation arrangement.

14. (Currently amended) A cardiac lead, comprising:
a lead body comprising one or more electrical conductors with associated insulators and having a proximal end and a distal end; and
an endocardial electrode assembly situated at the distal end of the lead body, the electrode assembly comprising:
a pacing electrode comprising an active fixation arrangement, the electrode electrically coupled to at least one of the electrical conductors; and
a fluoropolymer coating or sleeve provided on ~~a majority of an exposed~~ all of an electrically active surface of the active fixation arrangement sufficient in coverage to inhibit exit block development yet facilitate electrical stimulation of cardiac tissue.

15. (Original) The lead of claim 14, wherein the electrode assembly further comprises a polymeric coating disposed on at least the active fixation arrangement, and the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve is disposed over the polymeric coating.

16. (Original) The lead of claim 14, wherein the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve comprises a polytetrafluoroethylene coating or sleeve.

17. (Original) The lead of claim 14, wherein the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve comprises an ePTFE coating or sleeve.

18. (Original) The lead of claim 14, further comprising a steroid eluting sleeve disposed on the active fixation arrangement.

19. (Currently amended) A cardiac lead, comprising:
a lead body comprising one or more electrical conductors with associated insulators and having a proximal end and a distal end; and
an endocardial electrode assembly situated at the distal end of the lead body, the electrode assembly comprising:
at least one extendable/retractable pacing electrode, the electrode electrically coupled to at least one of the electrical conductors; and
a fluoropolymer coating or sleeve provided on ~~a majority of~~ all of an electrically active surface of the electrode sufficient in coverage to inhibit exit block development yet facilitate electrical stimulation of cardiac tissue.

20. (Original) The lead of claim 19, wherein the electrode assembly further comprises a polymeric coating disposed on the electrode, and the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve is disposed over the polymeric coating.

21. (Original) The lead of claim 19, wherein the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve comprises a polytetrafluoroethylene coating or sleeve.

22. (Original) The lead of claim 19, wherein the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve comprises an ePTFE coating or sleeve.

23. (Original) The lead of claim 19, further comprising a steroid eluting sleeve disposed on the electrode.

24. (Currently amended) A method of implanting a cardiac lead on a patient's heart, comprising:

accessing, via a patient's chest cavity, an epicardial surface of the heart;
moving an electrode assembly of the epicardial lead to an implant site on the epicardial surface, the electrode assembly comprising:
a pacing electrode comprising an active fixation arrangement; and
a fluoropolymer coating or sleeve provided on ~~a majority of an exposed~~ all of an electrically active surface of the active fixation arrangement sufficient in coverage to inhibit exit block development yet facilitate electrical stimulation of cardiac tissue; and
implanting the electrode into myocardial tissue at the implant site by use of the active fixation arrangement.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein the active fixation arrangement comprises a helical shape imparted to the electrode.

26. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein the electrode assembly further comprises a polymeric coating disposed on at least the active fixation arrangement, and the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve is disposed over the polymeric coating.

27. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve comprises a polytetrafluoroethylene coating or sleeve.

28. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve comprises an ePTFE coating or sleeve.

29. (Original) The method of claim 24, further comprising eluting a steroid at the implant site.

30. (Currently amended) A method of implanting a cardiac lead in a patient's heart, comprising:
- accessing a chamber of the patient's heart;
 - moving an electrode assembly of the endocardial lead to an implant site in the heart chamber, the electrode assembly comprising:
 - a pacing electrode comprising an active fixation arrangement; and
 - a fluoropolymer coating or sleeve provided on ~~a majority of~~ all of an electrically active surface of the active fixation arrangement sufficient in coverage to inhibit exit block development yet facilitate electrical stimulation of cardiac tissue; and
 - implanting the pacing electrode into myocardial tissue at the implant site by use of the active fixation arrangement.
31. (Original) The method of claim 30, wherein the active fixation arrangement comprises a helical shape imparted to the electrode.
32. (Original) The method of claim 30, wherein the electrode assembly further comprises a polymeric coating disposed on at least the active fixation arrangement, and the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve is disposed over the polymeric coating.
33. (Original) The method of claim 30, wherein the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve comprises a polytetrafluoroethylene coating or sleeve.
34. (Original) The method of claim 30, wherein the fluoropolymer coating or sleeve comprises an ePTFE coating or sleeve.
35. (Original) The method of claim 30, further comprising eluting a steroid at the implant site.